

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are all the claims pending in the application.

By this amendment, Applicant editorially amends claims 2 and 3 to correct minor informalities. The amendments to claims 2 and 3 are made for reasons of precision of language and consistency, and do not narrow the literal scope of the claims and thus do not implicate an estoppel in the application of the doctrine of equivalents.

In addition, claim 1 now incorporates the limitations of former claim 7, thereby placing the Application in condition for allowance as detailed below.

Finally, Applicant amends the Specification to describe the numeral reference 3b illustrated in Fig. 3.

Preliminary Matter

As a preliminary matter, Applicant respectfully submits a certified copy of the priority document, German Application No. 198 45 025.7. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to acknowledge receipt of the certified copy of the priority document.

On the Form PTOL-326, the Examiner has indicated that an Information Disclosure Form PTO SB/08 is attached to the Office Action. This Form, however, was not attached to the Office Action. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to return the initialed form PTO SB/08 submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement filed on March 30, 2001.

In addition, in rejecting some of the pending claims, the Examiner has applied a European Patent No. 540,903 A1 to Lawrenz. On the Form PTO-892, however, this reference is

not listed. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to list this reference on the Form PTO-892, in order to make the reference formally of record.

Finally, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to indicate approval of the drawings.

Summary of the Office Action

The Examiner rejected claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. In addition, claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) and claims 1, 4, and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Finally, the Examiner indicated that claims 9-14 are allowed.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Applicant thanks the Examiner for pointing out, with particularity, the aspects of the claims thought to be indefinite. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw this rejection in view of the self-explanatory claim amendments being made herein.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,317,638 to Schreder et al. (hereinafter "Schreder") and claims 1, 4, and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by European Patent No. 0 540 903 A1 to Lawrenz (hereinafter "Lawrenz").

Both Schreder and Lawrenz fail to teach or suggest at least the claimed feature "wherein said at least one process signal relates to a switch-on function that is transferred from the at least one higher-level unit by way of said bus to said device and then to at least one of said

components that controls and monitors the external technical process, and said logical links relate to a shut-off function that is processed exclusively by said processing functionality of said device,” as recited in the original claim 7 and now in amended claim 1.

In other words, claim 1 is now claim 7 rewritten in its independent form, and should now be allowed. By amending claim 1 to include the features of claim 7, this rejection is rendered moot. Claims 2-6 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 1.

Allowed Claims

Applicant thanks the Examiner for allowing claims 9-14.

Conclusion

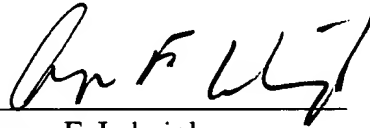
In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No.: 09/821,159

Attorney Docket No.: Q63371

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



George F. Lehnig
Registration No. 36,359

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: September 14, 2004